

August 22, 2018

Hon. Jesse Furman  
Thurgood Marshall Courthouse  
40 Foley Square  
New York New York 10007

Dear Judge Furman:

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to read my letter. It is emblematic of the fairness of our legal system, and I am grateful for this opportunity.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michal Carlebach, and I am 27 years old. I recently transitioned from a career as a direct support professional working with disabled adults in a dayhab center, to teaching preschool children. I recently learned to adapt to living on my own and supporting myself financially. More importantly, I recently learned that my father, David Carlebach, pled guilty to committing a crime. That was when my world collapsed.

To be honest, my world was already close to collapsing. My parents relationship had been severely strained since 2011. I recall waking up to the sound of my parents fighting in the early morning, and hearing my father's sighs as he grabbed his briefcase and left the house. This can't compare to the memory of waking up to the sound of federal marshals pounding on our door, at 6:00am, pointing to a picture of my father and informing me that he was a wanted man.

Your honor, that is how you know my father. A wanted man. A guilty man. But the truth is, he is so much more than that.

He is a man who was always looking to defend the underdog. When people approached him in synagogue for free legal advice, he patiently provided it, often delaying his own Sabbath meals. When the congregation where he prayed was sued, and a problem existed with their insurance coverage, my father was quick to become involved in the litigation. He assisted the congregation with obtaining insurance coverage in order to defend the claim, without asking for any compensation.

My father is unafraid to take a stand, even if it is unpopular, and no other lawyers in the community would get involved. In one instance, a group of homeowners in the Boro Park Jewish community were being defrauded through fraudulent mortgages owned by other members of the orthodox community. My father fought the establishment and the religious community at a

great cost to his own reputation and finances, defending these homeowners for six years. This case in particular exacted a great emotional toll on our family life, but my father always put the interests of his clients over all other matters.

My father is a cantor and singer, blessed with musical talent. He has used his musical ability for outreach and inspiration with everyone- family members on holiday festivities; singles and divorcees at holiday meals; and community members at religious ceremonies. Even during his stay in jail, he used his musical talent to uplift and inspire fellow inmates. During the period he was on bail, he has continued to bring his musical talents and guitar to various communities, as part of his mission of outreach and inspiration. He has expressed to me interest in continuing to do so after his incarceration, using music as a form of outreach and healing for those in need.

My father is my greatest cheerleader: Since my early teens I have struggled with my weight. I tried numerous diets and exercise programs, but with few results, and as I grew older and began feeling the implications of my weight gain, my self confidence plummeted and I was ready to give up. It was my father who convinced me not to, and my father who offered to pay for personal training sessions and a nutritionist in order to help me to feel my best.

My father has also always accepted and supported my life's choices, even when considered unconventional, or, quite literally, unorthodox. Examples that come to mind include putting dating on hold in a community that values and prioritizes marriage; taking a break after earning my BA in order to work and explore several career options as opposed to jumping into a Master's program with uncertainty; and moving out of my home when single women traditionally remain at home until marriage in our community- but it was necessary for my growth.

My father is my confidant and friend. Being the eldest child in my family, I have always held a special bond with him. He was always the parent I turned to when I needed a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear. When I failed, or made mistakes, he would remind me that I was more than my mistakes, and encourage me to learn from them. He never judged me for my mistakes, but motivated me to do better, to be better. When I was willing to settle for less, he reminded me of my true value. Recently, I contemplated marriage with a young man who was not an ideal marriage partner. My father was the one who spent hours talking to me about the relationship, forcing me to think critically and face the fact that I was not making wise choices. Even during his incarceration he continued to advise me and encourage me.

My father is not afraid to admit to making a mistake. Following his incarceration we have shared many frank, deeply emotional conversations. He acknowledged that he was responsible for his actions, accepts the consequences, and expressed remorse.

Most of all, your honor, my father is a man who suffered. It took me a while to process that he was guilty, because the man I know would never have acted in this manner. The man I know is an upstanding citizen, a good man, and a caring father. The man I know loves his children dearly, and would never do anything to hurt them- even at his own expense. I know this because

he remained in an unhappy marriage for our sake, hoping to spare us from the stigma of divorce that existed in our community and would negatively impact our marriage prospects. The man I know respected his clients, and would never do anything to hurt them either- which only indicates how desperate he was.

I ask you to consider the fact that he has no prior record. I ask you to consider the fact that I share a special bond with him, as he is the parent I connect with and depend on. Most of all, I ask you to consider the fact that he has contributed greatly to my character development and growth as an individual, and without his guidance and love I will be lost.

Thank you/

Respectfully yours

Michal Carlebach

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michal Carlebach". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.